

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

- 1 1. A system for retrieving search results from a plurality of databases,
2 comprising:
3 an interface configured to receive search information; and
4 a plurality of translators configured to retrieve search results from said
5 plurality of databases respectively based on said search information;
6 wherein each of said plurality of translators formulates a search request using
7 said search information and syntax and protocol information specific to its corresponding
8 database; and
9 wherein said plurality of translators use said respective search requests to
10 retrieve said search results from their corresponding databases in a concurrent manner.
- 1 2. The system of claim 1 further comprising:
2 a control engine configured to forward said search information to said
3 plurality of translators and to consolidate said search results retrieved by said plurality of
4 translators.
- 1 3. The system of claim 2 wherein said search results consolidated by said
2 control engine are passed to said interface for display to a user.
- 1 4. The system of claim 2 wherein said search results consolidated by said
2 control engine are passed to said interface for further processing.
- 1 5. The system of claim 3 wherein said consolidated search results are
2 formatted using a markup language.
- 1 6. The system of claim 5 wherein said markup language is selected from
2 a group consisting of HTML, DHTML and XML.
- 1 7. The system of claim 1 wherein each of said translators is further
2 configured to perform one or more authorization steps so as to communicate with its
3 corresponding database.
- 1 8. The system of claim 1 wherein at least one or more of said plurality of
2 databases are Web-accessible.

1 9. The system of claim 8 wherein at least one or more of said plurality of
2 databases are locally accessible.

1 10. The system of claim 1 wherein each of said plurality of translators
2 communicates with its corresponding database using an interface protocol.

1 11. The method of claim 10 wherein said interface protocol is selected from a
2 group consisting of HTTP, telnet, Z39.50 and ODBC.

1 12. The system of claim 1 wherein said interface is implemented using a
2 Web browser; and
3 wherein said interface receives said search information from a user.

1 13. The system of claim 1 wherein said system is implemented using
2 computer software.

1 14. A system for retrieving search results from a plurality of databases,
2 comprising:
3 a user interface configured to receive search information entered by a user;
4 a plurality of translators, wherein each translator is configured to communicate
5 with a corresponding database so as to allow a search to be performed in said corresponding
6 database; and
7 a control engine configured to forward said search information to said
8 plurality of translators, wherein each translator uses said search information and protocol
9 information specific to its corresponding database to formulate a search request to effectuate
10 said search;
11 wherein said plurality of translators use said respective search requests to
12 effectuate said respective searches and retrieve said search results from said plurality of
13 databases in a concurrent manner.

1 15. The system of claim 14 wherein said control engine is further
2 configured to consolidate said search results retrieved from said plurality of databases.

1 16. The system of claim 14 wherein each translator is further configured to
2 perform one or more authorization steps so as to communicate with its corresponding
3 database.

1 17. The system of claim 14 wherein said search results consolidated by
2 said control engine are passed to said user interface for display to a user or returned to a
3 calling program.

1 18. The system of claim 17 wherein said consolidated search results are
2 formatted using a markup language.

1 19. The system of claim 18 wherein said markup language is selected from
2 a group consisting of HTML, DHTML and XML.

1 20. The system of claim 14 wherein at least one or more of said plurality
2 of databases are Web-accessible.

1 21. The system of claim 20 wherein at least one or more of said plurality
2 of databases are locally accessible.

1 22. The system of claim 14 wherein each of said plurality of translators
2 communicates with its corresponding database using an interface protocol.

1 23. The system of claim 22 wherein said interface protocol is selected
2 from a group consisting of HTTP, telnet, Z39.50 and ODBC.

1 24. A method for retrieving search results from a plurality of databases,
2 comprising:

3 receiving search information from a user or a user agent;

4 formulating a plurality of search requests using said search information and
5 database syntax and protocol information, wherein each search request is recognizable by a
6 corresponding database;

7 executing said plurality of search requests in their corresponding databases in
8 a concurrent manner;

9 returning search results from said plurality of databases after execution of said
10 plurality of search requests; and

11 consolidating said search results for display to the user or the user agent.

1 25. The method of claim 24 further comprising:

communicating said plurality of search requests to their corresponding
databases using an interface protocol.

26. The method of claim 25 wherein said interface protocol is selected
from a group consisting of HTTP, telnet, Z39.50 and ODBC.

27. The method of claim 24 further comprising:
formatting said consolidated search results using a markup language.

28. The method of claim 27 wherein said markup language is selected
from a group consisting of HTML, DHTML and XML..

29. The method of claim 24 further comprising:
performing one or more authorization procedures respectively in said plurality
of databases in a concurrent manner.

30. The method of claim 24 wherein at least one or more of said plurality
of databases are Web-accessible.

31. The method of claim 30 wherein at least one or more of said plurality
of databases are locally accessible.

32. A method for retrieving search results from a plurality of databases,
comprising:
receiving search information from a user;
generating a plurality of search requests using said search information and
database syntax and protocol information, wherein each search request is tailored to be
understood by a corresponding database;
retrieving search results from said plurality of databases in a concurrent
manner pursuant to said plurality of search requests; and
consolidating said search results.

33. The method of claim 32 further comprising:
performing one or more authorization procedures respectively in said plurality
of databases in a concurrent manner.

34. The method of claim 32 further comprising:

communicating said plurality of search requests to their corresponding
databases using an interface protocol.

35. The method of claim 34 wherein said interface protocol is selected
from a group consisting of HTTP, telnet, Z39.50 and ODBC.

36. The method of claim 32 further comprising:
formatting said consolidated search results using a markup language.

37. The method of claim 36 wherein said markup language is selected
from a group consisting of HTML, DHTML and XML.

38. The method of claim 32 further comprising:
presenting the consolidated search results to the user or a user agent.

39. The method of claim 32 wherein at least one or more of said plurality
of databases are Web-accessible.

40. The method of claim 39 wherein at least one or more of said plurality
of databases are locally accessible.

41. A computer-readable medium having program code configured to
retrieve search results from a plurality of databases, said program code comprising:
a program code segment configured to receive search information from a user;
a program code segment configured to formulate a plurality of search requests
using said search information and database syntax and protocol information, wherein each
search request is recognizable by a corresponding database;
a program code segment configured to perform one or more authorization
procedures respectively in said plurality of databases in a concurrent manner;
a program code segment configured to execute said plurality of search
requests in their corresponding databases in a concurrent manner;
a program code segment configured to return search results from said plurality
of databases after execution of said plurality of search requests; and
a program code segment configured to consolidate said search results for
display to the user.